

Nearly 400 Jobs at Risk as USPS Weighs Consolidation with Albany Facility

Newburgh, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) this week sent a letter to U.S. Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe to stress the importance of maintaining full mail sorting operations at the Mid Hudson General Mail Facility (GMF) in Newburgh, New York. The U.S. Postal Service recently announced an area mail processing (AMP) study to examine the possibility of consolidating the facility's operations with the Albany Processing and Distribution Center. Hinchey stressed the importance of the Newburgh facility to the local economy. The facility currently employs 380 workers in the Newburgh region.

"It's clear that the United States Postal Service is facing serious economic challenges, but closing the Mid Hudson General Mail Facility in Newburgh would actually make the problem worse," said Hinchey. "The possible consolidation or closure of this facility could result in delays in mail delivery and significantly higher transportation costs. The Postal Service needs to carefully consider the benefits of this facility, including the no-cost long-term lease and the GMF's ideal location near Interstates 84 and 87 and Stewart Airport. I'm going to keep fighting to keep this facility open because closing it would have negative impacts on our region's economy and result in the loss of jobs for up to 380 hardworking people. I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that doesn't happen."

The Postal Service is currently accepting comments from the public on the study to determine if the Mid Hudson General Mail Facility should be consolidated with the Albany Facility. Hinchey says local residents can make their opinion known by writing to the USPS District Office at: Manager of Consumer and Industry Contact, 1000 Westchester Ave, White Plains, NY 10610-9631.

In August, Hinchey urged the Postmaster to prevent the closure of the Newburgh facility after it was announced that the USPS had initiated a separate AMP study to consider consolidation with a distribution center in White Plains, New York. The White Plains AMP study was recently suspended pending the outcome of this new AMP study with Albany.

Hinchey is a cosponsor of legislation designed to help ease the financial challenges currently faced by USPS. The United States Postal Service Pension Obligation Recalculation and Restoration Act of 2011 (H.R. 1351) would free up billions in financial resources for USPS every year. Under current law, the Postal Service is required to pre-fund healthcare benefits of future retirees at a cost of \$5 billion annually. H.R. 1351 would help reduce the financial burden of this requirement by allowing the Postal Service to use billions of dollars in pension overpayments to pre-fund healthcare benefits of future retirees. The legislation is strongly supported by the National Association of Letter Carriers.

The full text of Hinchey's letter to the Postmaster General follows:

September 29, 2011

Patrick R. Donahoe, Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260-0010

Dear Mr. Donahoe:

I am writing as a follow-up to my August correspondence regarding the Mid Hudson General Mail Facility (GMF) in Newburgh, New York. As you know, the GMF in Newburgh was identified several months ago for an area mail processing (AMP) study for possible consolidation into the Westchester Processing and Distribution Facility in White Plains, NY. While I understand that this previously announced AMP study has been suspended, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) recently announced a new AMP study to examine consolidation of the Newburgh AMP with the Albany Processing and Distribution Center. I reiterate my deep concerns and strong opposition to the downsizing or closing of the Newburgh GMF.

I recognize the serious financial challenges facing the USPS and am working to support efforts in Congress that assist the USPS in tackling these difficulties. However, I am alarmed that USPS is again considering significantly downsizing or closing the Mid Hudson GMF. The possible consolidation or closure of this facility could result in delays in mail delivery, significantly higher transportation costs, and negative impacts on the economy of the Mid

Hudson Valley region. The potential loss of more than 380 jobs at this facility could deal a very serious blow to the region's struggling economy and adversely affect many area businesses, including companies that use and rely on the facility's bulk mail services.

I would like to reiterate my concerns that consolidation or closing of the facility would produce modest or little cost savings while the impacts on local workers, their families, and the region's economy would be considerable. In the event of a significant downsizing or closure, employees would very likely lose their jobs since most cannot relocate or commute approximately 90 miles one way to the Albany facility. Alternatively, the Mid Hudson facility offers considerable advantages to USPS, including its location near I-84, I-87, and Stewart International Airport. According to recent reports, the facility is also leased to USPS for 99-years for one dollar. I hope that you will fully scrutinize these important concerns and also weigh the considerable advantages offered by the Mid Hudson GMF.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I look forward to your response on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Maurice D. Hinchey